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McCone backs bill to give Congress CIA reports

STATINTL

By Thomas B. Ross
Sun-Times Bureau

WASHINGTON — John A. McCone, a former Central Intelligence Agency director, has endorsed a bill that would require the CIA to turn over its secret intelligence reports to Congress.

His endorsement indicates that the CIA has abandoned its long-standing opposition to the circulation of its secrets outside the executive branch.

Aides to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee reported Monday that McCone had committed himself to testifying in favor of the bill during hearings starting Tuesday. The aides said the Nixon administration had registered its opposition to the bill, thereby preventing the current CIA director, Richard M. Helms, a presidential appointee, from taking a position on it.

Indirect support

But McCone's testimony is sure to be interpreted as indirect CIA support of the bill. Former directors of the agency, a loyal and tightly knit group, rarely, if ever, take a public position that the incumbent director opposes.

The bill was introduced by Sen. John Sherman Cooper (R-Ky.) last July, shortly after the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Sun-Times and other newspapers published the Pentagon papers. The papers revealed that the CIA consistently expressed a skeptical view of Vietnam from the Truman to the Nixon administrations. Cooper and other senators argued that Congress might have blocked the deep U.S. involvement if it had received the intelligence estimates.

Regular reports

Cooper's bill would require the CIA to make regular reports to the Foreign Relations Committee, the Senate Armed Services Committee, the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the House Armed Services Committee. It also would require the CIA to provide special information on request.

Tuesday's witnesses will be Chester Cooper, former intelligence analyst for the CIA and the White House, and Herbert Scoville, former head of the CIA's research division.

Sec. of State William P. Rogers, who has asserted the right to testify for the CIA, has been asked to appear after the Easter recess to present the administration's position. He may send a subordinate but presumably not Ray Cline, head of the department's bureau of intelligence and research.

An ITT director

Cline, a former deputy CIA director for intelligence, recently told the committee that he favored the distribution of CIA reports to Congress, provided the "sources and methods of intelligence gathering" were not jeopardized. Cooper insists that his bill provides adequate protection.

McCone is scheduled to testify next month. It may be the first in a series of appearances before the committee. As a director of the International Telephone & Telegraph Corp., he is a potential witness in the committee's planned investigation of the involvement of major corporations in U.S. foreign policy.

According to memos released by columnist Jack Anderson, McCone was given reports on ITT negotiations with the CIA to devise a plan for blocking the installation of Salvador Allende, a Marxist, as President of Chile in 1970.

EARTH
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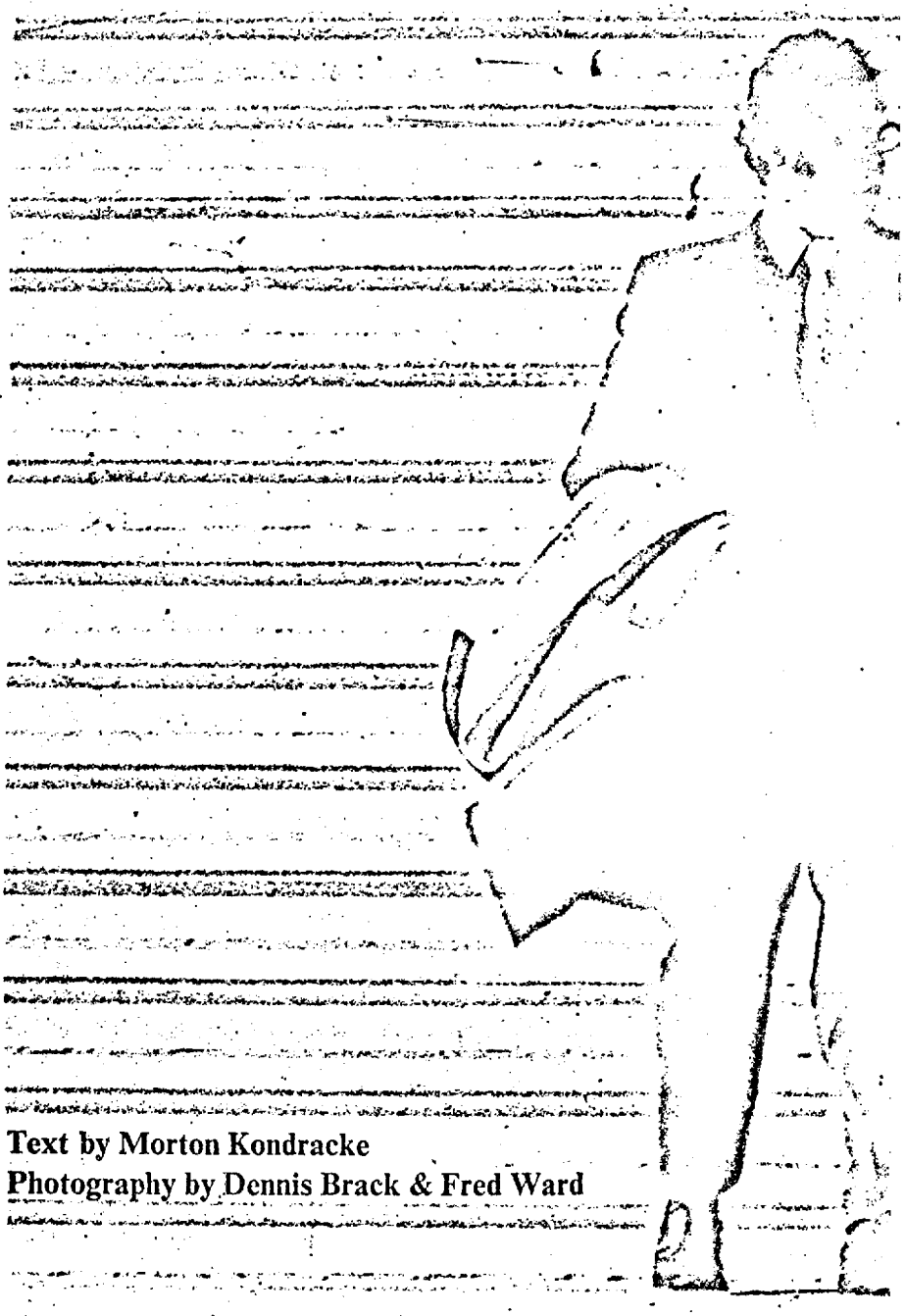
THE SELLING OF



Text by Morton Kondracke
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FOREIGN POLICY
1 MAR 1972

THE PENTAGON PAPERS AND THE VANTAGE POINT

by Leslie H. Gelb

Most authors undoubtedly would like the opportunity to review their own works—while most editors undoubtedly would take a dim view of the propriety of such an undertaking. On this point, however, as on so many others, the propriety appropriate for the Pentagon Papers seems to us to deviate from the normal: who else is more proper and better qualified to review them than the man principally responsible for producing them? Consequently, we invited Leslie Gelb to write this review article for us. In the process, he decided to add some comparative references to Lyndon Johnson's memoirs. This is a bonus for which we are most grateful, since the idea of asking President Johnson to review those memoirs somehow never occurred to us.—The Editors.

In this article, I will try to do three disparate things: (1) clear up some of the minor mysteries that have arisen about the studies and documents of the Pentagon Papers; (2) compare the Pentagon Papers account of U.S. policy-making with respect to Vietnam to President Lyndon Johnson's *Vantage Point*; and (3) draw some lessons on understanding the Presidency.

The Minor Mysteries

Perhaps the most precise, but least stylish, way of doing this is to ask and answer the key questions that have been raised.

What exactly was Secretary McNamara's guidance?

The guidance was not provided in written form, nor was it given to me directly by Mr. McNamara. I tried to see him on many occasions to discuss this particular matter, but was told that (a) everything I was doing was "just fine" (I was sending finished studies into his office as they were completed), (b) "just get it done," and (c) he wanted to stay as far away from the Task Force work as possible so that the final product could not be said to have been influenced by him in any way.

The only guidance I received was oral—from the now deceased former Assistant Secretary of Defense John McNaughton, and from the Military Assistants to the Secretary of Defense. They said Mr. McNamara wanted "encyclopedic and objective studies of U.S. involvement in Vietnam," "preservation of the substance of the documentary record," "let the chips fall where they may," "no interviews," "make sure all the information is readily retrievable," "do an index," and "complete the task in three months." Morton Halperin (who was then the ISA Deputy for Policy Planning and who also had a supervisory role in the Task Force) and I agreed to interpret the first part of the guidance as meaning "cover as much ground as possible" (aid, pacification, government-to-government relations, advisory effort, air and ground wars, and negotiations) beginning in the Roosevelt Administration and ending at some point in 1967, "be fair-minded" (try to understand everyone's point of view), and "feel free to make critical judgments of policy decisions if clearly warranted by and based upon the documentary evidence." We did not have the time to do the indexing. At least three additional deadlines were subsequently imposed and none met until the study was completed in December 1968.

The "no interviews" part of the guidance had special meaning. I sought clarification and was told that Mr. McNamara did not want the collecting and weighing of the documents to be influenced by anyone and that the study was not to be regarded by me as anything approaching final history, but as input to history, material to be made available to historians after declassification.

I passed on this guidance as interpreted and clarified to each of the authors. I stressed that each monograph or study was to aim at connecting documents by narratives that would help to understand the documents. These instructions were followed in varying degrees by the authors. In those cases where the author or authors finished their study without closely following instructions, I had no recourse but to accept the study. Most of the authors, like myself, were moonlighters, continuing to work on their regular current policy assignments, even as they worked on the Vietnam Task Force. I could rarely extend their tours with the Task Force and could rarely recruit additional personnel.

No instructions were given to me about what topics to select for monographs. After consulting with a number of the senior members of the Task Force who were making a survey of the documents, I made up a list of studies

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Victor Zorza

Experts Overlook Politics in Hanoi

Why did the Tet offensive, so widely predicted for the period of Mr. Nixon's visit to Peking, never happen? Because Hanoi never made the decision to strike which had been imputed to it so confidently in the highest U.S. intelligence estimates.

Even as Defense Secretary Melvin Laird was claiming that "the enemy has advertised an offensive as they have advertised no other offensive in Vietnam," there was evidence that the politburo in Hanoi was bitterly divided on the issue. In the end, the Hanoi hawks lost because the White House recognized the signs and gave the doves a helping hand.

At the end of December the CIA was telling the White House to expect only a series of "high points" in the fighting, but by January it began to predict a major offensive. The rate of infiltration, captured documents, the order of battle — all these were used as the basis for the prediction.

But, as so often happens in intelligence work, the Communists' intentions were inferred from their visible capabilities—which are easily discerned, but which have proved again and again to be a false guide — rather than from the political process in the leadership, which has been repeatedly underestimated. In the case of North Vietnam, there has been a tendency in intelligence quarters to dismiss the notion that anything like a political process exists at all—as it had once been dismissed in the case of the Soviet Union and China.

In fact, the evidence of the hawk-dove fight was available by the middle of December. A major analysis of the war published in the Hanoi Press made it clear that neither faction had yet won and that the options were still open.

The Communist forces, it said, were now in a position either "to deal strong blows or to fight in a protracted fashion." Much of the evidence was reminiscent of the previous debates in Hanoi, as, for instance, before the 1968 Tet offensive, between hawks who wanted to strike hard and doves who preferred negotiations.

THIS ANALYSIS was not generally accepted when it was first outlined on this page in January. If it was correct, then it followed that the administration might be able to avert an offensive by making certain concessions which would help the Hanoi doves to prevail against the hawks.

But the horrendous predictions persisted. Gen. William Westmoreland, U.S. Army chief of staff, went to Vietnam and forecast a "major offensive." Laird insisted that "several spectaculars" were to be expected, starting in February. John Paul Vann, the head of the American advisory effort in Military Region II, announced to the press that he was "absolutely certain" about the coming offensive. "There isn't any question as to what the enemy's intentions are," he said.

But White House adviser Henry Kissinger evidently disagreed. He too spoke of the preparations for the Tet offensive, but he explained that the publication of the secret offer he had made in Paris was designed to avert it. It was, he said, "an attempt to say to them once again, 'it (the offensive) is not necessary, let's get the war over with now.' "

But the public announcement, which only restated the terms he had secretly proposed long before, could hardly be expected to avert the offensive without some advance on his previous offer. There is, in fact, every reason to believe that an improved offer was made privately, and that it was this that helped the Hanoi doves to hold back the Tet offensive — for the time being, in the hope of further concessions to come.

If the intelligence analysts learn from this incident to look more closely at the political evidence — and there is a great deal more of it than could be cited in this column — than at the order of battle, then their failure may prove to be of lasting benefit to their craft.